

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed on July 16, 2004 has been received and the Examiner's comments carefully reviewed. Claim 26 has been amended and claims 32 and 33 have been added. The amendment and new claims are supported throughout the specification, in particular, refer to Figures 4, 8, and 11a-c. Accordingly, no new subject matter has been added. Applicants submit that in view of the following remarks, the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1-5, 10-13, 18-20, and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Sinclair, III et al. (US 20020118820 A1) in view of Chang et al. (US 6,159,040). This rejection is traversed.

The above-rejected claims all relate to a splitter card comprising a circuit board and connectors connected to the circuit board wherein the connectors include contacts electrically connected to termination posts that *extend through* the circuit board such that the ends of the termination posts are *exposed*. The Office Action erroneously equates the metal pins 63 shown in Figure 7 of Sinclair, III with the terminations posts according to the above-rejected claims. See the outstanding Office Action at page 3. The metal pins 63 of Sinclair, III are part of header strip 62 of a connector card 14. See Sinclair, III at paragraph 0058. Sinclair, III et al. fail to disclose or suggest that metal pins of the header strips *extend through* a circuit board of the splitter card 72 of Sinclair, III. Moreover, metal pins 63 disclosed in Sinclair, III are not *exposed*. Once the splitter of Sinclair, III is assembled, the metal pins are received by the socket strip 66 of the edge card 16. See Sinclair, III at paragraph 0035 explaining that Figure 7 is an exploded side view and paragraph 0058 explaining that the metal pins are received by the socket strip 66 of the edge card 16. Accordingly, there is no motivation to combine Sinclair, III with a secondary reference that relates to the insulation of exposed termination posts, as such a modification would obstruct the electrical communication required between the edge card 16 and the connector card 14 (see paragraph 0057), rendering the device inoperable. Therefore, the above-rejected claims are not obvious.

Claims 6-9, 14-17, and 21-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Sinclair, III and Chang as applied to claims 5, 13, and 20 above, and further in view of Minks et al. (US 3,960,436). The above-rejected claims depend on and further limit claims 1, 10, and 18, which were discussed above. Minks et al. fail to cure the above described defects of Sinclair, III; therefore, claims 6-9, 14-17, and 21-24 are not obvious for the same reasons claims 1, 10, and 18 are not obvious.

Claims 26-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Magyar et al. (US 20030190838 A1). This rejection is traversed. Claim 26 relates to an insulator for covering exposed terminal posts projecting from a circuit board of a telecommunications device. The insulator includes, among other things, mounting flanges constructed to mount the strip to a circuit board. Magyar et al. fail to disclose or suggest an insulator for covering exposed terminal posts extending from a circuit board of a telecommunication device. In addition, Magyar et al. fail to disclose or suggest an insulator having a strip comprising mounting flanges for mounting the strip to a circuit board. In contrast, Magyar et al. are directed at a housing of an electrical device. The device 800 has flanges 818 constructed to mount the device to a block 600, not a circuit board, as recited in claim 26. The device 800 is used to house electrical connections 604 and 606 shown as outlets in Figure 1, not cover termination posts projecting from a circuit board, as recited in claim 26. See Magyar et al. at Figure 7 and pages 1-3. Accordingly, claim 26 is not obvious. Claims 27-31 depend on and further limit claim 26 and, therefore, are not obvious for at least the same reasons.

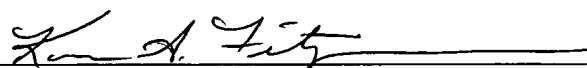
New claims 32 and 33 relate to splitter cards that include, among other things, a plurality of splitters mounted to a circuit board, and dielectric insulator members mounted to the circuit board to so as to cover exposed ends of termination posts. At least for similar reasons as discussed with regards to claims 1 and 10, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 32 and 33 are patentable.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at 612-336-4617.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402-0903
(612) 332-5300

Date: October 14, 2004


Karen A. Fitzsimmons
Reg. No. 50,470
KAF/JEL:sll

